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INTERESTING THE INVALID

BY MARGARET C. WILLIAMS
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Fruit and flowers are the usual offering of those who would bring cheer to the sick and convalescent. What is more refreshing and beautiful a token than something that shows the dear outside is still throbbing with life and joy, and is only waiting to greet the invalid's return to it?

It became my pleasant task, lately, to visit a young foreign girl whose convalescence was expected to be a long and tedious one. As I could speak her native tongue, my visits seemed to bring her much joy, but during the intervals, she would often grow depressed.

One day, I hit upon a happy plan, and it was so successful, that I am sure others would like to hear of it. I took an ordinary quart preserve jar to the bird store where, for fifty cents, the man sprinkled the bottom with nice white pebbles, put in three feathery looking stems, one black snail, one red one, and a very tiny gold fish. For five cents more, I got a little box of gold-fish breakfast food. I had previously tied a narrow red ribbon around the jar's neck. It did not conceal the fact that it was a jam jar, but it did give it a jaunty air, and when the bird and fish man had done his work, it looked most finished and elegant. I wanted this in a hurry, as a sort of life-saver. Such it really became.

The young girl, an absolute stranger in the city, was like the prisoner in his cell, whom popular tradition obliges to tame a spider, or a mouse. Every afternoon, a ray of sunshine used to creep to her table, and play with the bit of fairyland in the jar. The girl found much pleasure in watching it, a little of the out-door life had come into her own, and what was more, it depended on her care for sustenance, for her growing strength allowed her to sprinkle the breakfast on the water every morning, according to instructions.

Rather than bother the nurse with extra care, I changed the water myself, twice a week, during my visiting hour.

To a lover of animals, I think it is the only live gift that can be offered; cats, birds, etc., being often looked upon with disfavor, to say the least.

I have great fears, however, that if this grew into a popular fad, and every invalid requisitioned a gold fish bowl beside his bed, the doctors and nurses, arising, would smite the originator in their wrath. (But if the editor is willing, I am ready to take a chance.)